

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as currently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3-12, 14-30, and 32-40 are currently pending. The present Amendment amends Claims 1, 3, 7, 12, 14, 20-23, and 36, cancels Claims 2, 13, 31, and 37, and adds Claims 38-40. The changes and additions to the claims are supported by the originally filed application. No new matter has been added.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1, 8-11, 23, 25-30, and 32-36 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hiroshima et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,701,568, herein "Hiroshima") in view of Komata et al. (Japan Patent No. 2001-312147, herein "Komata"); Claim 12 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hiroshima and Komata, further in view of Asakura et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,201,943, herein "Asakura"); and Claims 2-7, 13-22, 24, 31, and 37 were objected to but noted as allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicant appreciatively acknowledges the indication of allowable subject matter in the claims.

In response to the objection to allowable Claims 2, 13, 31, and 37, independent Claims 1, 12, 23, and 36 are amended to incorporate allowable Claims 2, 13, 31, and 37, respectively. Accordingly, Claims 2, 13, 31, and 37 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that amended independent Claims 1, 12, 23, and 36 are allowable.

In addition, new Claims 38-40 are added to vary the scope of protection recited in the claims. Claim 38 recites all the features of allowable Claim 2 along with some of the features of original Claim 1. Claim 39 recites all the features of allowable Claim 13 along with some of the features of original Claim 12. Claim 40 recites all the features of allowable Claim 24

along with some of the features of original Claim 23. Therefore, new Claims 38-40 do not introduce new matter and are believed to be allowable.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above discussion, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as amended herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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